

# Catching the Current: Building an Activator Culture



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# Building an Activator Culture

Exploring the mindsets, habits, and behaviors that distinguish top-performing partners.

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# Meet the Panel



**Jeanne Hammerstrom**

*Chief Marketing Officer, Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan, & Aronoff LLP*



**Judith Itkin**

*Chief Lawyer Recruiting and Development Partner, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP*



**Erin Corbin Meszaros**

*Global Business Development and Marketing Officer, Eversheds Sutherland LLP*

## MODERATOR



**Brenda Plowman**

*Founder, Plowman Consulting*

*Managing Director, Canada, DCM Insights*

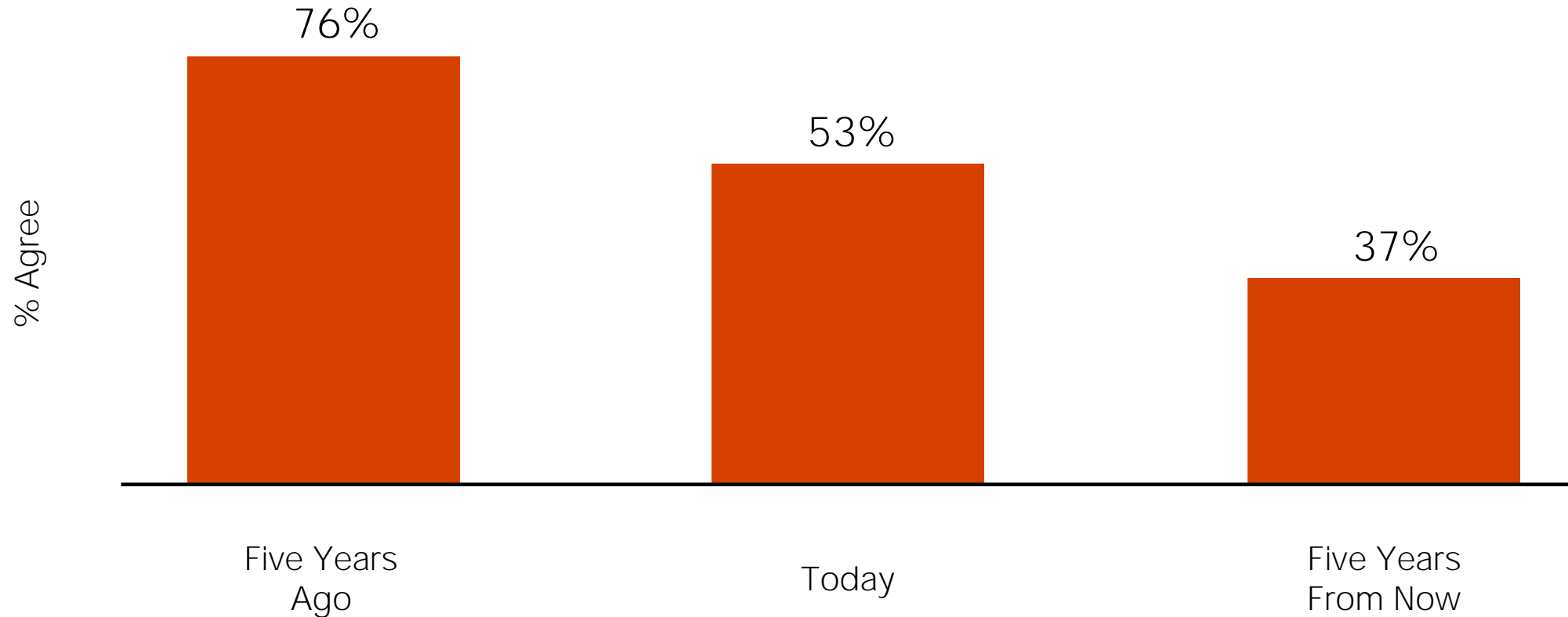
# Contents

The professional services landscape is evolving rapidly, creating unprecedented opportunities for firms to adapt their business development strategies. Groundbreaking research studying 2,941 business developers across 41 firms identified five distinct partner profiles—with one clear winner. The Activator profile. This session will reveal the specific mindsets, habits, and behaviors that distinguish top-performing partners, exploring how culture can influence measurable results.

- Current Buying Landscape
- Rainmaker Study
- 5 Partner Profiles
- Clear Winner & Losers
- Winning Activator Approach

# A Different Kind of Buying

**“We’d go with the same professional services partner/firm we’ve used in the past if we had a new need”**



# Study Methodology

## Performance Measures

- Percent of maximum available incentive compensation
- Generating revenue for the firm
- Generating revenue from new clients
- Generating additional revenue from existing clients
- Generating revenue for areas of the firm other than his/her own practice area
- Effectiveness at business development vs client-related work

## Factor Analysis

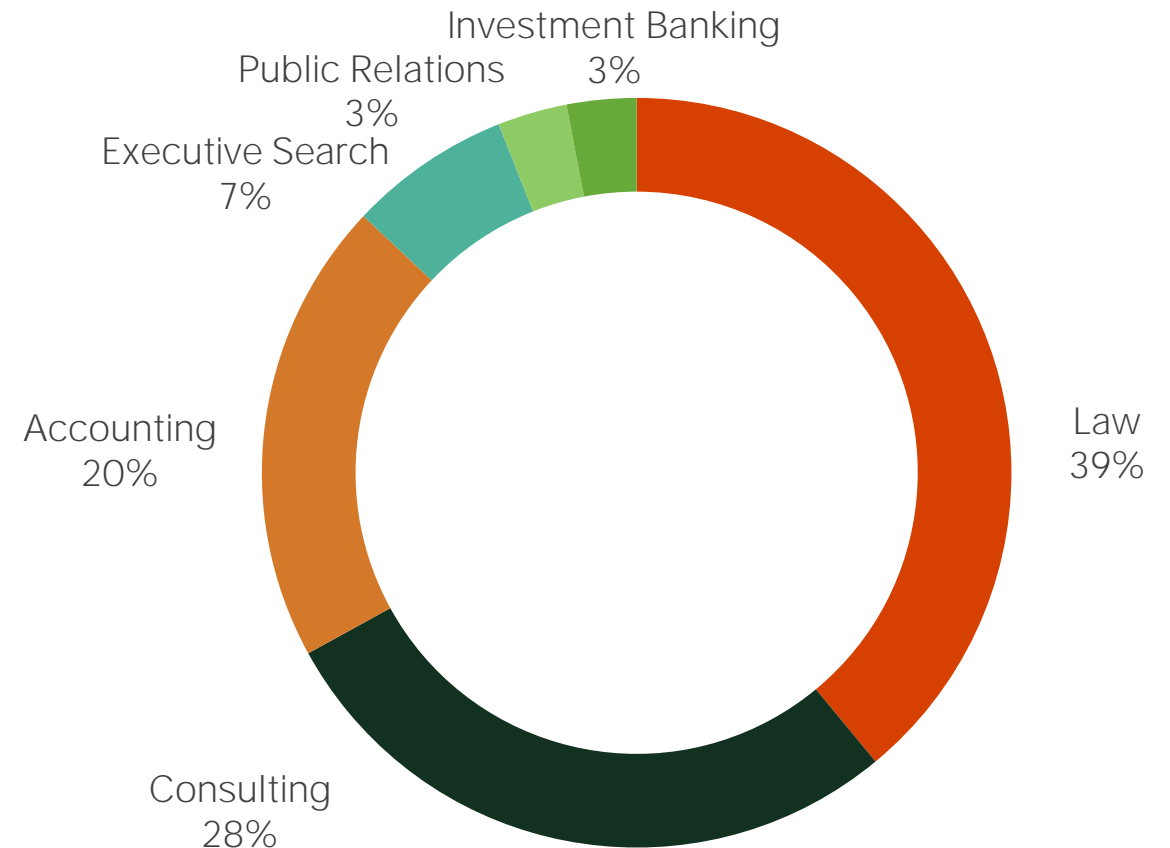
- Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
- Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

## Regression Analysis

- Compared factors to performance ratings
- Regressed all variables against outcomes

= **Profile of  
Top  
Rainmakers**

# Survey Sample: By Participant Type



- 35-40 min Behavioral Survey
- 100+ Behavioral Interviews

# Five Distinct Partner Profiles

Each Partner in our study could be placed into one of five statistically-defined business development approaches:



## Expert

- BD approach more about responding to established demand rather than creating demand
- Focused on opportunity/client “fit”
- Looks for clients with clear needs that match their own capabilities
- Prioritises clients with budget



## Confidant

- Highly responsive to client needs
- Delivers exceptional client service
- Builds deep personal relationships with clients
- Leverages track record of strong client work to get new work
- Emphasises senior-most relationships



## Activator

- Leverages events and social platforms to build a robust client network
- Educates clients on critical trends and issues
- Proactively engages clients on new opportunities to work together
- Makes introductions to other partners and practice areas



## Debater

- Always has a different view of the world
- Loves to debate the client on what’s best for their business
- Leads with their deep subject matter expertise
- Brings innovative solutions to the client
- Wants the client to follow their lead

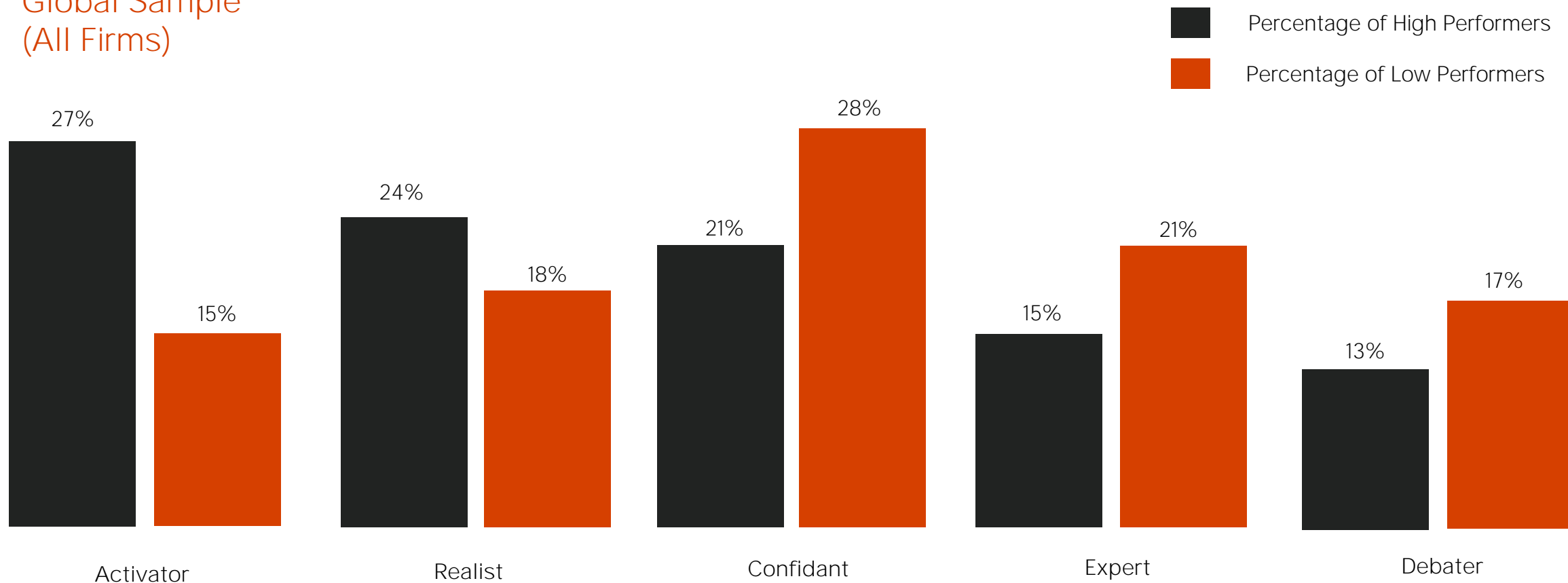


## Realist

- Focused on setting proper expectations with the client
- Openly discusses budget, fees and other money-related issues with clients
- Comfortable telling the client “no”
- Shields themselves from no-win client situations

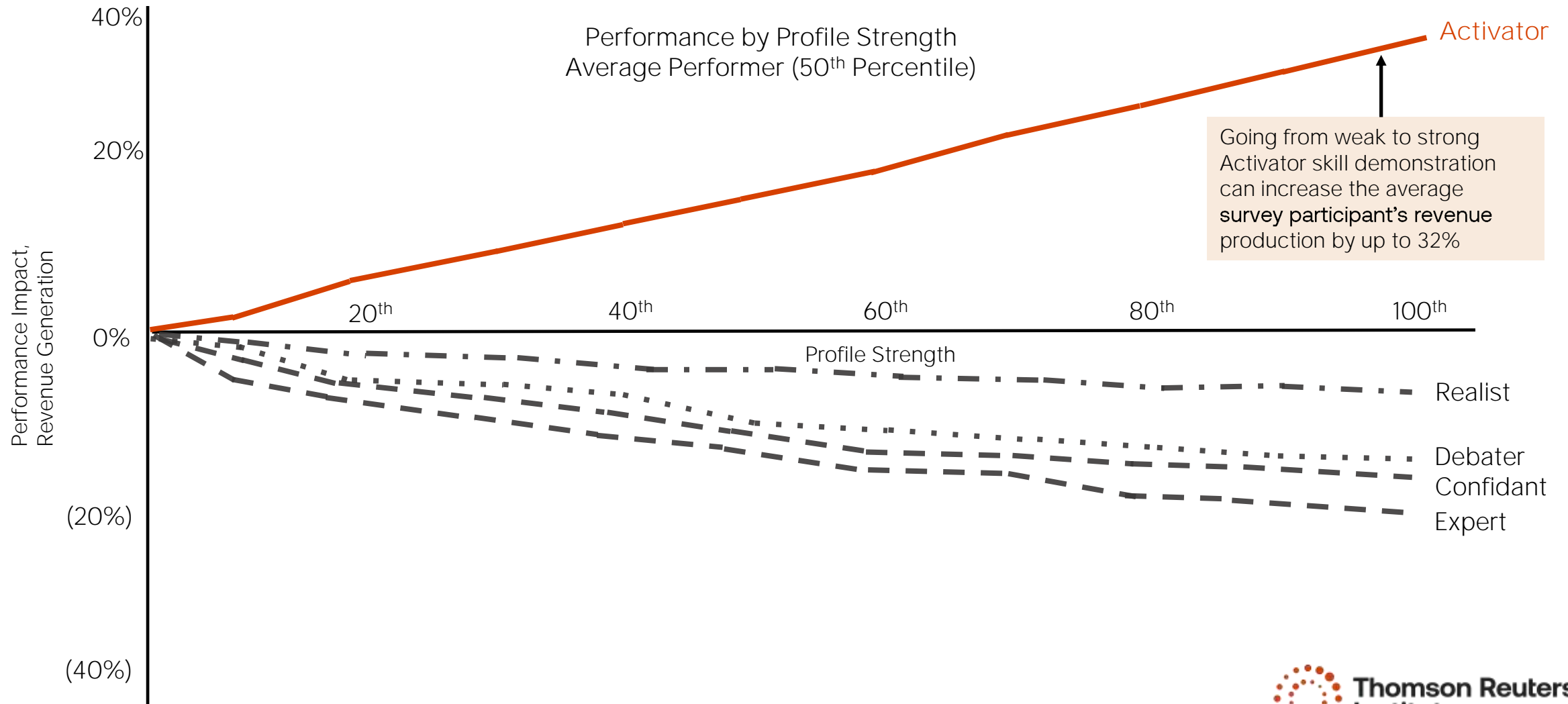
# Performance Analysis Reveals Clear Winners & Losers

Global Sample  
(All Firms)





# One Clear Winner

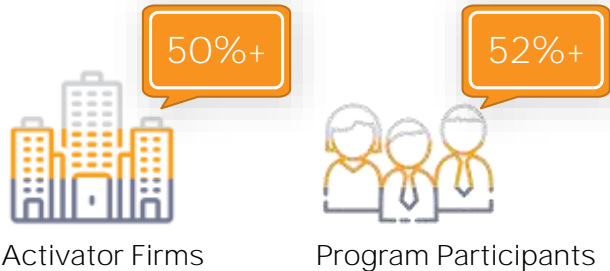


# Firms Are Turning to Activator to Solve for Growth

Global deployment of Activator has rapidly accelerated as more firms generate concrete results.

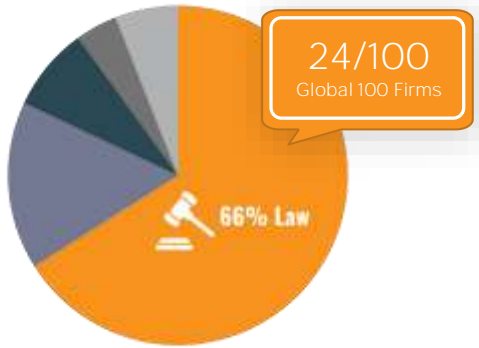
## ACTIVATOR REACH

### Activator YoY Growth: 2024 v 2025



Increase in firms + participants that completed Activator

### DCMi Clients



% YoY growth of Activator clients

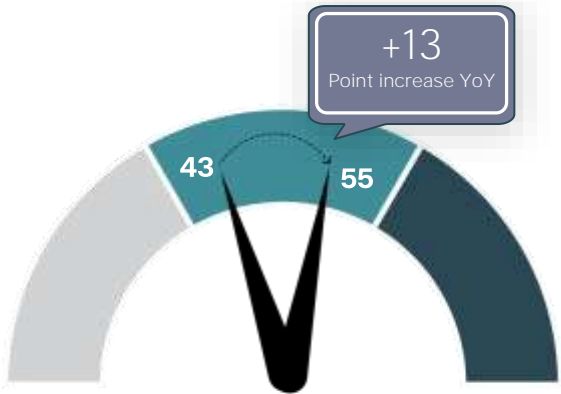
### Global Footprint



Countries with 2025 Activator programs

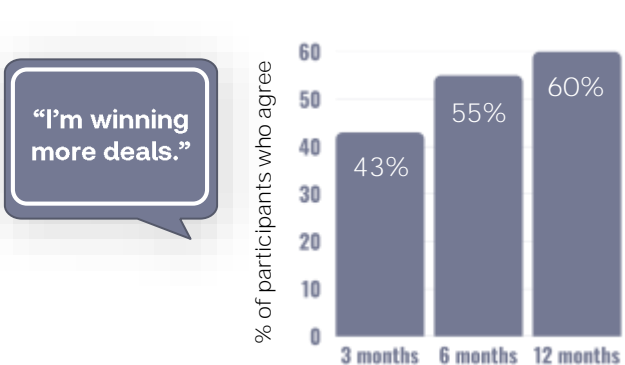
## PROGRAM IMPACT

### Participant Behavior Change



Average participant Activator scores before and after program

### Increase in Deals



Participant feedback post program

### Uptick in Revenue Generation



Participants generate up to 32% increases post program



Thank  
you!